



Severe winter weather affects Red Cross blood, platelet donations

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American Red Cross

Donors urgently needed after nearly 1,000 blood drives canceled since Feb. 1

ST. LOUIS — Following round after round of snow, freezing rain and arctic cold in many parts of the country, the American Red Cross has an urgent need for eligible blood and platelet donors to give now to help restock its shelves.

March storms forced the cancellation of more than 200 blood drives, resulting in nearly 7,000 uncollected blood and platelet donations. This shortfall follows more than 26,400 uncollected blood and platelet donations in February due to severe weather across 27 states. In the Missouri-Illinois Red Cross Blood Services Region, more than 40 blood drives were canceled, causing more than 1,300 blood and platelet donations to go uncollected. Despite the weather, hospital patients still rely on transfusions.

“Blood products are being delivered to hospitals almost as quickly as they come in,” said Scott Caswell, CEO of the Missouri-Illinois Blood Services Region. “Donors who give now aren’t just restocking our shelves, they are making sure hope continues to be available for patients in need.”

As weather conditions improve, the Red Cross urges donors of all blood types to make and keep appointments to help restock its shelves. Platelet donors, as well as blood donors with the most in-demand blood types – O negative, A negative and B negative – are particularly encouraged to give in the days and weeks to come to help replenish the blood supply.

Platelets help prevent massive blood loss and are a vital part of cancer and organ transplant treatments. With a shelf life of just five days, platelet donations are especially needed. Eligible donors with types O negative, A negative and B negative blood are encouraged to donate double red cells where available. During a double red cell donation, two units of red cells are collected while most of the plasma and platelets are returned to the donor.

To find a convenient donation opportunity and schedule an appointment, donors can download the free Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

How to donate blood

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation’s blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).

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